
News Release

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Virginia opens new veterans care center

RICHMOND—The Virginia Department of Veterans Services will dedicate the state's second long-term care center for veterans on September 26 at 1 p.m. Governor Kaine will be the keynote speaker. The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) is located on the campus of the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond.

"This is a state-of-the-art facility," said Department of Veterans Services Commissioner Vince Burgess. "It's all on one floor and features 160 single-occupancy rooms in three nursing units. We will have two 60-bed skilled nursing care units and one 40-bed Alzheimer's dementia unit with enclosed courtyards."

The design of SBVCC reflects the latest in health care facility design and research. All rooms are single occupancy to limit the spread of infectious diseases and assure residents a level of privacy essential to their mental well-being. Each room has a floor-to-ceiling window, private bath and walk-in shower. The Alzheimer's unit features a wander garden and interconnected hallways allowing residents to move around freely in a safe and secure environment.

The facility will provide physical, occupational, and speech therapy, as well as therapeutic recreation, social and spiritual activities, and other amenities such as an on-site pharmacy, a fully equipped barber and beauty shop, activity and game rooms, resident lounges in each nursing unit, courtyards and an outdoor walking trail. Veterans may be admitted as long-term residents, or may also be admitted on a short-term basis for rehabilitation as they transition from hospital care to home.

The 114,000-square foot facility was built using a combination of funds provided by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Commonwealth. “For these facilities, the VA puts up 65 percent of the construction cost and the state funds the remainder,” explained Burgess.

To be eligible for admission, a veteran must have an honorable discharge and must be a Virginia resident at the time of admission. Veterans may also qualify if they were Virginia residents at the time they entered the military or if Virginia is listed as their official home of record on their military records.

The Department of Veterans Services expects to begin accepting residents later this fall.

The Care Center is named for two Congressional Medal of Honor recipients: Colonel Van T. Barfoot and Colonel Carl L. Sitter. Barfoot was awarded the Medal as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army for extraordinary heroism in the face of point blank fire on May 23, 1944, near Carano, Italy. Sitter received the Medal as a Captain in U.S. Marines as commanding officer in action against enemy aggressor forces at Hagaru-ri, Korea, on November 29 and 30, 1950.

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About the Virginia Department of Veterans Services

The Department of Veterans Services operates 22 benefit services offices where representatives assist veterans and their family members in filing claims for federal veterans benefits. The agency operates two veterans cemeteries: the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia and the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. A third state veterans cemetery in Dublin is in the initial stages of development. DVS operates the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Roanoke. The VVCC is a 240-bed long-term care facility offering nursing and domiciliary care for veterans. The 160-bed Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center is located in Richmond and is slated to open in late 2007. The agency also certifies that post-secondary educational institutions meet G.I. Bill funding and eligibility requirements, enabling veterans and family members to pursue educational opportunities.